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Project Inspire 2012

Meet the 2012 Winners & Finalists

FAQs

MEET THE 2012 WINNERS & FINALISTS

Grand Prize Winner

Women's Private Personal Marketplace

What or who is your greatest source of inspiration?

For many years, my inclination to do something meaningful for the less privileged was limited to monetary donations to various social causes, but deep down in my heart, I felt the need to physically provide my services to causes that help to uplift the poor. Eventually, I took the plunge of leaving the corporate world to do something meaningful for society, to share my knowledge and skill sets with others who have not had the opportunity to access the same.

Why do you think women's empowerment is important?

I believe that women can and should have a fundamental role in the development of sustainable livelihoods. Women are the main victims of

Team: Rustam Sengupta (India), K.V. Kanchana (India), Nicole Darabian (France)

Project Location: India

Project Aim: To facilitate women entrepreneurs in rural Rajasthan, India, to educate and sell hygiene products through a mobile application

worldwide poverty, thus preventing societies from fully achieving their development potential. By creating and supporting entrepreneurial opportunities for women, I believe that women can be lifted out of poverty, which will have a positive effect on the economy while promoting social growth and advancing towards gender equality.

How will you change the world for women and girls?

We believe that our mobile application will have a significant, positive impact in the lives of many women and girls living in rural areas. This mobile application will initially be for women entrepreneurs in rural Rajasthan. The long-term goal of this project is to expand the program to more districts in other rural parts of India and South Asia. We hope to impact over 10 million women over the next five years.

What can other people do to help disadvantaged women and girls?

Despite the existence of many organizations that strive for women's empowerment, there is still a need for these organizations to work together through strong partnerships and aligned goals. As contemporary organizations such as the Gates Foundation and the Clinton Foundation have stressed, the ability to achieve an impact lies in the ability to create and foster strong partnerships. In this sense, we believe that it is important for organizations working towards an overarching goal to support each other's initiatives through collaborating with each other and maximize their efforts to generate a greater impact in the lives of the women and girls of this world.

Why do you think entrepreneurship is a great way to empower women?

We believe the sustainability of a project is essential to generate long-term and meaningful impact within a community and the world. We think empowering women through entrepreneurship creates a sustainable form of livelihood for rural women while enabling the participation of more women in the process. Our review shows that women and girls reinvest 90% of their income in their families and community. This statistic reinforces our belief that offering entrepreneurship training for women in developing countries will not only improve their own lives and their families' well-being, but also generate benefits at a larger economic and social development scale.

What is your favorite inspirational quote?

"The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems" - Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

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Special Recognition Award

LIFE – Livelihood Initiatives for Empowerment of Women

What or who is your greatest source of inspiration?

My greatest source of inspiration is the women who have transcended all barriers and conquered the world.

Why do you think women's empowerment is important?

Women are the core of any society - they hold all aspects together, amidst all difficulties and disasters. As mothers, wives, and daughters, they can become the agents to success as they play a crucial role in molding the lives around them. Thus if they are empowered with knowledge and support to overcome the challenges they face in day to day life, they can become the agents of social change.

How will you change the world for women and girls?

We will change the world for women and girls through recognizing and being sensitive to their problems and issues, and helping them realize their true capacity.

What can other people do to help disadvantaged women and girls?

They can be more sensitive to the issues involving women and girls, recognize the need for change, and get involved as change agents.

Why do you think entrepreneurship is a great way to empower women?

According to many international researchers, women produce between 60 to 80 percent of food in developing countries. Thus, their role is vital in increasing food security. This scenario is more significant in a post-

Team: Dulma Kandaramage (Sri Lanka), Selina Kumar (Sri Lanka), Ashokumar Jegatheepan (Sri Lanka)

Project Location: Sri Lanka

Project Aim: To help women in the resettled villages of Northern Sri Lanka enhance their entrepreneurship capacities on income-generating activities

conflict setting, where women are burdened with the responsibility of being breadwinners in addition to caring for their children and family. Through enhancing their entrepreneurship capacity, their efforts to provide for their families and to achieve food security can be more formalized and stabilized.

What is your favorite inspirational quote?

"Do the difficult things while they are easy and do the great things while they are small. A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." - Lao Tzu; an ancient Chinese philosopher

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People's Choice Award

Project Stitch

What or who is your greatest source of inspiration?

Our greatest source of inspiration are the Filipino women workers who struggle to make a living and at the same time, provide care to their families. Poverty in the Philippines is high, and jobs are insufficient. Every day, we see women vendors on the street, toiling in the heat of the sun, and women blue-collar job workers brow-beaten from the day's work. Despite the meager pay, they find the strength to wake-up the next day, tend to their families and go to work. Seeing these women makes us realize how lucky we are, and how they are the true epitome of perseverance, strength and power - the unsung heroes of our society.

Why do you think women's empowerment is important?

Women's empowerment is important as it addresses a huge problem in society. People believe that the issue women's place in society has already been resolved. However, in many countries, women are still expected to stay at home and take the brunt of family care, or to work and at the same time raise a family. Sometimes, they suffer abuse from their partners and discrimination at work. Women's empowerment must encompass even the poorest of the poor, and those who have silent voices because they are underprivileged and lack education.

Team: Marian Santos (Philippines), Soleil Manzano (Philippines), Jose Maningat (Philippines)

Project Location: Philippines

Project Aim: To provide support and livelihood to displaced women in the poor communities of Manila, Philippines, through sewing co-operatives

How will you change the world for women and girls?

We will change the world for women and girls by taking a proactive stance on women's issues, and not being afraid to defend or speak out for them.

What can other people do to help disadvantaged women and girls?

They should be vigilant towards the rights of disadvantaged women and girls. It is unfortunate to be disadvantaged, but to be disadvantaged and looked down upon as a woman makes it a perilous situation, which should not be tolerated.

Why do you think entrepreneurship is a great way to empower women?

By engaging women in entrepreneurial activities, we are providing them with one of the essential skills they must have to be truly empowered. Aside from taking care of their families, women in our country are often required to work long hours in harsh conditions just to provide for their family. Through entrepreneurship, they can exercise better control of their time, and still continue to be good providers for their family.

What is your favorite inspirational quote?

"To love. To be loved. To never forget your own insignificance. To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places. To pursue beauty to its lair. To never simplify what is complicated or complicate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all, to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never, to forget." - Arundhati Roy

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2012 Finalists

Carpets for Communities

Team: David Bacon (Australia), Rowan Klaassen (Netherlands)

Cents for Seeds

Team: Rachel Hardy (USA), Caitlin Barrett (Australia), Eloise Wellings (Australia)

E-learning for Change

Team: Chitra Iyengar (India), Ishan Thakore (India) and Prachi Shah (India)

Buffalo, Cows, and Leaves: Empowering Nepali Women

Team: Binod Prasad Poudel (Nepal), Chandra Adhikari (Nepal), Veronica Schindler (USA)

The Gudri Project

Team: Darshna Goswami (India), Pippa Reid (UK), Edwina Ong (Singapore)

Project Light – Darkness/Interrupted

Team: Gloria Arlini (Indonesia), Fairoz Ahmad (Singapore)

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